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COMPREHENSIVE HANDBOOK ON EARTHQUAKES IN UTAH IS NOW AVAILABLE

Salt Lake City, Utah -- Living in Utah means living with earthquakes. Do you know where earthquakes are likely to occur in Utah and what kind of damage they can cause? If a large earthquake occurred right now, what would you do? Do you have a disaster plan and supplies? Have you taken simple steps, such as strapping down your water heater, to reduce your earthquake risk at home?

These questions and others are now addressed in a new publication released by the Utah Seismic Safety Commission (USSC) called *Putting Down Roots in Earthquake Country – Your Handbook for Earthquakes in Utah*. The “Roots” handbook is a comprehensive resource that provides a variety of information on earthquakes in Utah in an easy-to-read format.

The handbook outlines why Utah is seismically active, areas where strong earthquake shaking is expected to occur, and how earthquakes cause damage. In addition, it includes seven steps to follow to reduce your risk from earthquakes, and what you should know about the potential financial impacts of earthquakes. The handbook will be useful for Utah’s families, businesses, and schools, as well as planners and policy makers. “The Roots handbook will help Utahns prepare for and reduce the impacts of future quakes,” says Peter McDonough, chair of the USSC.

Utah has experienced 16 strong earthquakes (greater than magnitude 5.5), some of which caused considerable damage, since pioneer settlement in 1847. In addition, geologic studies of Utah’s faults indicate a long history of repeated “Big Ones” of magnitude 6.5 or greater prior to settlement. These large earthquakes can cause substantial loss of life and damage buildings and infrastructure. Therefore, “if you live or work in Utah, you need to know what you can do before, during, and after an earthquake to be safe and protect your property,” says Robert Carey of the Utah Division of Homeland Security.

Free print copies of the handbook are available in limited quantities at the Natural Resources Map & Bookstore (1594 W. North Temple, Salt Lake City), the Utah Division of Homeland Security (1110 State Office Building, Salt Lake City), and from city and county emergency managers (for more information see the government section of your local telephone book). The handbook is also available online at the USSC web site (<http://ussc.utah.gov/>). Circulation of the handbook in Wasatch Front newspapers is planned for April of this year.

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The USSC developed and published the Roots handbook together with the Utah Division of Homeland Security, the Utah Geological Survey, the University of Utah Seismograph Stations, and the Structural Engineers Association of Utah. The handbook is adapted from California versions of the Putting Down Roots handbook developed by the U.S. Geological Survey and the Southern California Earthquake Center.

The USSC is a 15-member commission created by the Utah State Legislature and charged with reviewing and assessing Utah's earthquake-related hazards and risks, providing information on earthquake safety, and promoting earthquake loss-reduction measures.

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